

Serial No. 10/615,071 – Rettig
Art Unit: 3682 – Attorney Docket 52.061
Response to Office Action dated March 22, 2005
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In the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at line 21, page 5 with the following:

The first spacer 56 is formed of pair of rings 60 and 60', and second spacer 58 are is each formed of a pair of rings 60'' and 60'''. The pair of rings 60 and 60' and the pair of rings 60'' and 60''' are each positioned in an inverted relationship with regard to one another on opposite sides of the stem 42 to form the spacers 56 and 58, respectively. Each ring 60, 60', 60'' and 60''' is formed of a generally rigid material, such as an injection molded plastic, or metal, and includes a generally circular base 62 and a number of tabs 64 extending outwardly from one side of the base 62. Each of the tabs 64 extends outwardly from the base 62 along or in conformance with the shape of the base 62 such that the tabs 64 do not obscure or narrow the diameter of a central opening 66 defined by the base 62. Further, while the base 62 is generally circular in shape in order to conform to the shape of the steer tube 30, based on other possible configurations for the steer tube 30, such as a rectangular or other polygonal shape, the rings 60, 60', 60'' and 60''' and base 62 can be formed as necessary to conform to the various shapes for a steer tube 30.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at line 3, page 6 with the following:

Looking particularly at Fig. 5, each of the tabs 64 has a wide end 68 and a narrow end 70 that both extend outwardly perpendicularly from the base 62 and are joined by a downwardly sloping surface 72. Further, the tabs 64 are positioned around the base 62 such that the narrow end 70 of each tab 64 is positioned immediately adjacent, and/or forms a part of the wide end 68 of an adjacent tab 64. While this is a preferred embodiment for the rings 60, 60', 60'' and 60''', each of the tabs 64 can also be spaced from one another about the periphery of the base 62 in order to form rings 60, 60', 60'' and 60''' having tabs 64 of

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various sizes and configurations to provide the desired range of adjustment for the assembly 54.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at line 11, page 6 with the following:

In order to enable the pairs of rings 60 and 60' forming both the first spacer 56 and the pair of rings 60'' and 60''' forming the second spacer 58 to lockingly engage one another, each sloping surface 72 also includes a number of locking members 74 spaced along the length of the surface 72. In a preferred embodiment shown in Fig. 5, the locking members 74 take the form of rounded teeth 76 separated by complementary grooves 78 forming a descending, step-like configuration along the length of the sloping surface 72. Further, while the teeth 76 and grooves 78 are shown as being generally rectangular in shape and having rounded engaging ends 79 and 80, respectively, the shape of the teeth 76 and grooves 78 can be any desired shape that is capable of securely engaging a complementary shaped tooth or groove on the adjacent ring 60, 60', 60'' and 60''' to prevent the rotation of the rings 60 with respect to ring 60', or to prevent rotation of ring 60'' with respect to ring 60''' with respect to one another. The teeth 76 and grooves 78 are spaced along the entire length of the sloping surface 72 such that the respective rings 60, 60', 60'' and 60''' forming each spacer 56 and 58 can be engaged with one another at a number of different locations along the entire length of the surface 72 of each tab 64, enabling the rings 60, 60', 60'' and 60''' to be engaged with one another as shown best in Fig. 2 between the completely collapsed position of the ~~first second~~ spacer 568 to the ~~an~~ completely extended position of the ~~first second~~ spacer 586. Thus, the stem 42 can be positioned between the spacers 56 and 58 at different heights based upon the various configurations for the rings 60 and 60' of each spacer 56, or rings 60'' and 60''' of spacer 58, from the completely collapsed position to the completely expanded position.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at line 29, page 6 with the following:

Also, because the uppermost ring 60 of the first spacer 56 and the lowermost rings 60'' of the second spacer 58 are fixed to the tube 30, the overall width of the assembly 54 does not change regardless of the configuration of the spacers 56 and 58. More specifically, as best shown in Figs. 2 and 3, the overall height (H) of the assembly 54 is identical when the stem 42 is located in a centered position (Fig. 3) or when the stem 42 is located in an elevated position (Fig. 2). Thus, the assembly 54 can easily be utilized with steer tubes 30 having limited lengths for the attachment of the stem 42 in that the spacers 56 and 58 can be attached to the tube 30 to effectively limit the adjustment range for the stem 42 to the distances between the spacers 56 and 58.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at line 7, page 7 with the following:

In order to engage the assembly 54 on the steer tube 30, each pair of the rings 60 and 60' of spacer 56 and the rings 60'' and 60''' forming the spacers 56 and 58, respectively, is positioned around the steer tube 30 above the head tube 28. To maintain the assembly 54 in the proper location, the lower_upper ring 60 of the first spacer 56, and the upper_lower ring 60''' of the second spacer 58 are fixed to the steer tube 30 in any conventional manner, such as by using an adhesive or by welding, depending upon the material used to form the rings 60 and 60'''. By securing the rings 60 and 60''' to the steer tube 30, the assembly 54 can be maintained on the steer tube 30 to keep the stem 42 from sliding along the tube 30 or to prevent the inadvertent disengagement of the stem 42 from the steer tube 30. Also, when securing the rings 60 and 60''' to the tube 30, an individual can set the height range of the assembly 54 for use with stems 42 of different sizes. Further, other spacing members (not shown), such as O-rings or sleeves, can be positioned between the spacers 56 and 58 on the assembly 54 to allow for a greater or lesser adjustment range within the assembly 54. Alternatively, the lower_upper ring 60 of the first spacer 56, and the upper_lower ring 60''' of the second spacer 58 can be integrally formed with the steer tube 30 in order to avoid any

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problems with inadvertent disengagement of the fixed rings 60 and 60''' from the steer tube 30 and failure of the assembly 54. In this alternative embodiment, the non-fixed rings 60' and 60'' are formed from separable sections (not shown) that can be assembled around the tube 30 between the integral rings 60 and 60''' to form the assembly 54.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at line 25, page 7 with the following:

Once the fixed rings 60 of spacer 56 and each pair of the fixed rings 60''' forming each of spacer 56 and 58 are secured to the steer tube 30, the remaining non-fixed rings 60' and 60'' are positioned around the tube 30 between the fixed rings 60 and 60''' and can be rotated about the steer tube 30. The non-fixed rings 60' and 60'' are then positioned and engaged with the fixed rings 60 and 60''', respectively, to set the required gap between the respective spacers 56 and 58 for the attachment of the stem 42 therebetween to position the stem 42 at the desired height on the tube 30.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at line 1, page 8 with the following:

When it is desired adjust the height of the handlebar and stem 42 with regard to the bicycle frame 20, the first portion 47 and second portion 48 of the second end 46 of the stem 42 are disengaged from one another by removing the bolts 52 in order to remove the stem 42 from the steer tube 30. Once the stem 42 is removed, the non-fixed rings 60' and 60'' of each spacer 56 and 58, respectively can be disengaged from, and rotated with respect to, the fixed rings 60 and 60''' and rotated with respect to the fixed rings 60 in order to vary the widths of the first spacer 56 and second spacer 58, respectively. This consequently moves the gap defined between the first spacer 56 and second spacer 58 upwardly or downwardly with respect to the steer tube 30 to the desired location for the stem 42. Once the non-fixed rings 60' and 60'' are repositioned to configure the spacers 56 and 58, respectively, and the gap therebetween as desired, the second end 46 of the stem 42 can be reconnected to the steer

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tube 30 between the spacers 56 and 58 to maintain the stem 42 and handlebars at the selected location on the steer tube 30 during the operation of the bicycle 20.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at line 13, page 8 with the following:

In another embodiment of the assembly 54 of the present invention, the assembly 54 can be constructed with only one of the first spacer 56 or second spacer 58, and a separate positioning member (not shown) disposed on the tube 30 against the stem 42 opposite the spacer 56 or 58. Examples of suitable positioning members include O-rings, frictional sleeves, clamps, compression members and other mechanisms capable of being slidably mounted to the tube 30 and/or releasably engaged with the tube 30. When utilizing the positioning member in place of one of the spacers 56 or 58, the stem 42 does not need to be removed from the tube 30, as the positioning member can be slid along or removed from the tube 30 to provide additional room along the tube 30 to slide the stem 42 away from the remaining spacer 56 or 58 to enable the spacer to be adjusted in height using the fixed rings 60 and 60''' and non-fixed rings 60' and 60'', respectively, in the manner discussed previously.